United Nations A/59/PV.16

General Assembly

Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

16th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 29 September 2004, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency The Honourable Sebastian Anefal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Mr. Anefal (Federated States of Micronesia): I am honoured by the opportunity to speak before the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on behalf of the people of my Pacific island nation, the Federated States of Micronesia, and on behalf of our President, Joseph J. Urusemal.

Allow me to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your well-deserved election to this high office. I would also like to recognize Mr. Julian Robert Hunte of Saint Lucia for his distinguished service as president of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

Sadly, there have been so many recent disasters in which innocent lives have been lost that time does not permit me to mention them all. Whenever we learn of human suffering brought about by the forces of nature — whether by earthquake, storms or otherwise — our hearts go out to the victims. As Pacific islanders, my people feel a special sympathy for the victims of the recent typhoons and hurricanes in Haiti, Grenada, Jamaica, Cuba, the Cayman Islands, the Bahamas, Florida and in Japan and China, as well as in our own country and elsewhere in the Pacific, such as in Guam, the Mariana Islands and in Niue. It does not take a scientist to see that such storms are now occurring with increasing frequency and devastating intensity.

We must also express our great sadness over the continuing loss of life at the hands of terrorists, and we condemn in the strongest terms all those who wrongly think their causes are advanced by such misguided acts. All human life is precious, but the recent terrorist atrocity committed against schoolchildren in Beslan, Russia, was particularly vile. The world must speak out with one voice in utter contempt of those who were responsible.

I regret to say that, in addition to working to defeat terrorism, this body must also find more effective means of combating genocide that is sponsored or tolerated by a Government. There must be no refuge for those who would deny entire populations the basic right of existence.

It is obvious today that expressions of condemnation and even multilateral treaties do not deter such people. As our technology provides even more effective and readily available means of mass destruction, the bright promise of the coming years could be overwhelmed by an unthinkable nightmare.

The people of the Federated States of Micronesia know that even we, the inhabitants of a remote island nation, do not have the luxury of remoteness from the threats posed by such crimes against humanity. These

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are threats to which all are exposed and from which all are at risk. Though our numbers are relatively small, many of our finest young citizens are standing today with others on the front lines against tyranny and oppression. We will not shirk our commitment, but, if there is any hope of making such crimes a thing of the past, that commitment cannot be conditional or selective. It must be universal.

Even if we summon up the will to act collectively to put down the darker side of human nature through collective action, we must work much harder on a global scale to move towards eliminating the conditions that provide fertile ground for the sponsors of terrorism and genocide. These include conditions of poverty, hunger and inadequate access to clean water, sanitation, health care and education. All those conditions, of course, are familiar to students of the United Nations Charter. Thanks in no small part to the work of the Organization, statisticians are able to identify significant, even dramatic, progress over the past 60 years, and those trends can be expected to continue as we dedicate ourselves to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

But trends do not mean much to the children who will die of starvation today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. Growth in gross domestic product is of little comfort to the man desperately trying to support a family on less than $1 a day, who sees no hope of improving his situation. The world — acting through this and other bodies, in addition to providing direct assistance — must redouble its efforts, because there is still a long way to go, and this planet of ours becomes more dangerous every day.

As if what I have just mentioned were not challenging enough, we also now know that the global community faces a wide variety of complex tasks in protecting the planet from environmental catastrophe. We humans, sitting at the top of the genetic ladder, have the capacity to foul the nest of Creation, and most agree that that is happening to one degree or another. One thing is clear: we are the only ones who can do something about it. Considerable costs will be involved, and not just in funds. Some say that the industrialized world must change its deeply ingrained patterns of energy consumption and make other adjustments. Others say that the developing world must switch to more sustainable development approaches, at a higher initial cost.

Can the nations of the world afford the price tag of achieving all those things? The economic indications are that we can; it is a question of will, determination and perseverance. There is no lack of wealth in this world. By just about any measurement, people in the industrialized world today enjoy a far higher standard of living than has ever been known before. Many developing countries are not far behind. But, when it comes to actually taking the steps necessary to overcome the dilemmas I have mentioned, we confront the real challenge: to determine the wisest allocation of our resources and to act accordingly, in the spirit of the eight Millennium Development Goals.

It does not take a great deal of wisdom to conclude that mankind must continue to place high priority on the eradication of poverty and hunger. Likewise, the need for prudence in protecting our earthly environment and its resources is increasingly obvious. But allocating our resources properly, identifying the correct timing, and acting so as to attain those goals will require virtually every scientific, economic, political and ethical capacity that we can summon.

The process must involve an even-handed approach, without room for guilt, blame or jealousy. While there is a real need for action, there is no need for panic. The planet can still be saved, and the social conditions for despair can be overcome. We must, however, all play our respective roles with commitment, compassion and in accordance with an equitable division of responsibility. Let us put aside the finger-pointing and the tyranny of self-interest, and let us set about the task.

There are several issues of concern to my country regarding which I would like, briefly, to be more specific.

First, Micronesia looks forward to the convening of the International Meeting, in January 2005 in Mauritius, which will conduct the critical 10-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action, focusing on the particular needs and vulnerabilities of the small island developing States as they pursue sustainable development. During the past 10 years, we have seen progress in implementing the Programme of Action, with the close involvement and support of the Secretariat. However, that progress needs to be accelerated. The International Meeting will enable us to identify and make essential course corrections.

Naturally, over the past 10 years, we have also seen the emergence of new challenges and issues that were not originally addressed. Now these can also be considered. Overall, the outcomes of the International Meeting should be target-oriented so that progress in implementing the Programme of Action can be tracked and measured.

Of course, the International Meeting will be successful only if the representatives of island States are able to attend. Micronesia thus calls upon the donor community to provide generous support to the trust fund so that island States may be adequately represented at the Meeting. In that regard, I must acknowledge and express appreciation to those countries that have already contributed. Developing-country partners and developed countries should also make every effort to be represented at the highest possible political level to ensure that the International Meeting receives the political support it needs for the effective implementation of its outcomes.

Perhaps foremost among the vulnerabilities of Micronesia — together with other members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) — is our extreme exposure to the adverse effects of global climate change. For more than a decade now, we have been vocal in this body and elsewhere on virtually every aspect of climate change. One aspect of that issue is a source of increasing concern to me as the debate evolves beyond whether climate change is real to what should be done about it, and that aspect has to do with environmental ethics.

In Micronesia, as in most island States, our people have a tradition of living in harmony with nature. Consequently, our ecological "footprint" has been small. While we who live on islands can and need to do more to curb unsustainable practices, it is clear that we have contributed little to the climate crisis and that we can contribute little to its solution. Yet we are among the first to be affected and even face possible extinction.

For the populations of low-lying small islands, however, practical options are few. Land is in short supply on islands in the best of times, and that land has long been taken. Contrary to the romantic fantasy, there are no desert islands available; island populations already tend to be concentrated. Previous efforts to relocate island populations have brought suffering and cultural losses to the people concerned. To those of us facing the prospect of cultural eradication, the unabated advancement of already-inflated lifestyles in the industrialized world does not seem a "greater good". We continue to support the call of AOSIS for immediate implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

Export and licensing income from the bounty of Micronesia's waters and its vast exclusive economic zone is by far the greatest contribution to the nation's budget, next to foreign assistance. Fisheries are also a vital resource of virtually every Pacific island country. A cooperative approach on the part of coastal States and distant-water fishing nations in the sustainable conservation and management of those resources is essential, since we now know that they are not inexhaustible.

Thus, Micronesia welcomes the entry into force of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Central and Western Pacific Ocean, established pursuant to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We call upon all States and entities that have participated in the process of establishing the Conservation and Management Convention to assign high priority to cooperating fully in the implementation of its provisions.

I would like to put on record my country's growing concern over the practice of deep-sea trawling. The region of the Pacific contains literally thousands of seamounts, which scientists are finding to be extremely rich in biodiversity and which hold great potential value for future generations. Yet, short-sightedly, too many are dragging trawl nets over these deep-ocean areas, unknowing and uncaring as to the damage they are causing to the seabed below.

There is an urgent need for an improved and coordinated scientific focus on identifying and managing risk to biodiversity and the environment in the deep oceans. We need to broaden our presently inadequate knowledge about these unique ocean habitats and ensure that they are managed in a sustainable way. Meanwhile, given the risk posed by present practices, we urge the international community to impose and observe a moratorium on deep sea trawling.

Despite the extension in 2001 of the time frame set by the parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea for a delimitation of the continental shelf, Micronesia and many small island developing

States face continuing difficulties in meeting our obligations in this regard. The problem is a lack of financial resources and the scientific and technical expertise needed to acquire and collate the highly complex scientific data. Without targeted assistance from the donor community, countries like Micronesia will find it extremely difficult to make the required submission on the limits of the continental shelf, even within the extended time frame.

As neighbours and fellow islanders, we are saddened by the inability of the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, after almost 50 years, to secure full compensation for the death, sickness and destruction they suffered as a consequence of nuclear weapons testing. Recently declassified documents make it clear that the original settlements were not based on the full story of what happened to the Marshallese people as well as other peoples of the former Trust Territory. We join other Members in calling upon the United States to meet its responsibility in full.

This year, Micronesia wishes to again express its support for United Nations reforms, particularly for the reform of the Security Council and the inclusion of our neighbour, Japan, among its permanent members. We are increasingly concerned over the seeming lack of progress on this critical matter.

My final topic is security in the region of the Pacific. Our President shared with leaders at the recently-concluded annual meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum in Apia, Samoa, a common concern that amidst all the current attention to global security issues, the nations of the Pacific islands are being left largely to their own devices in dealing with threats related to organized crime and terrorism. We are working hard to address our vulnerabilities in these areas, but I would like to simply note here that the rest of the world, especially the North, is not serving its own best interests by giving short shrift to the possibilities for criminal and terrorist exploitation that are presented by our vast region. Over and above other traditional official development assistance, we need a range of targeted assistance in our region.

Once again, it has been our most valued opportunity to appear and address the General Assembly. The need for this Organization has never been stronger, and as each year goes by, it seems that the significance and relevance of our Charter increases. In these difficult times, we in Micronesia choose not to lose heart, but rather to take heart that we, the nations of the world gathered here, can together build not just a better world, but one that is a worthy inheritance for future generations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nagoum Yamassoum, Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs and African Integration of the Republic of Chad.

Mr. Yamassoum (Chad) (*spoke in French*): First of all, on behalf of the members of my delegation and on my own behalf, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, upon your election to the presidency of our Assembly. Your election is a great tribute to both our subregion in Central Africa and to your country, the Gabonese Republic. It is also a sign of recognition of your abilities as a statesman and a guarantee of our work's success. My thanks and my congratulations also go to your predecessor and his team for their dedication and the enthusiasm with which they did a great deal of work — which was much appreciated by all — in a particularly tense environment marked by animated debates about the Iraqi crisis.

Finally, I would like to pay a particular well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General of our Organization, our brother Kofi Annan, whose commitment and unceasing efforts to establish lasting peace and sustainable development in the world are praiseworthy. He can count on Chad's support for all of the initiatives that he is still undertaking with courage and tenacity, particularly in dealing with the problems and conflicts in Africa, initiatives through which he is thus contributing to restoring our Organization's credibility.

A year ago, when we addressed this Assembly and reiterated our commitment to defend the great causes of mankind, we took that opportunity to condemn terrorism and all forms of blind violence and intolerance that could lead our world astray. We recalled at the time that our States needed to apply the United Nations Charter in reacting to terrorist acts — or acts considered as terrorist — that constitute a threat to international peace and security. We reiterate those appeals, and call again on the sense of responsibility of our States to act together to curb by all possible means the major scourges that are such a dangerous threat to all mankind, physically as well as socio-economically.

With respect to combating terrorism, the Government of Chad, for its part, is actively cooperating with the appropriate institutions of the United Nations, under Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), in order to strengthen its national capacity to prevent and combat this scourge.

The past year for Chad, as for many African countries, was a year of serious concerns regarding the armed conflicts raging everywhere — conflicts that took peaceful populations hostage, destabilized our States and continued to jeopardize the joint efforts being made to establish democratic institutions and promote socio-economic progress.

Let us say, however, that the accomplishments under the agenda that led to the re-election of the President of Chad, His Excellency Idriss Deby, for a second term are progressing at a reasonable rate in spite of various difficulties. This agenda, which is perfectly in line with the Millennium Development Goals, seeks to create, through good governance, conditions that are conducive to the strengthening of peace and stability in the country so that we can promote education and health for all social strata, employment — particularly for the youth and women — and true synergy among the different forces and competencies arising from the various national entities. This must be done so that we can do an effective job in combating poverty and the great pandemics, such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. I recall here that this agenda, in which the fight against illiteracy and ignorance is written in capital letters, is based on the most important principles: peace, security and justice. Without these, it will not be possible to build a society in which universal values such as democracy and the respect for human rights are ensured.

In addition, the task of adapting our legislation to national and international realities was imposed on our national representation meeting, which made a commitment on 26 May 2004, to a procedure aimed at amending some provisions of the Fundamental Law adopted by referendum on 31 March 1996. This procedure, which will harmonize the Constitution with the requirements of democracy and fundamental freedoms, is in keeping with the final provisions of the Constitution, which itself authorizes the revision.

In this context of globalizing economies, in which the rules of the game are constantly being subverted, in particular by the practice of the largest States of subsidizing their own agricultural products to the detriment of the poorer countries, all efforts to resolve these developmental problems have been inconclusive. Even a strict application by our States of structural adjustment measures is still seriously threatened by the double weight of foreign debt and the complexity of social problems. Those issues make it practically impossible to take action to stimulate economic growth in the developing countries.

With the exception of oil resources, we are witnessing an ongoing decline in export earnings due to fluctuating commodity prices on international markets, and losses, caused principally by the policy of providing subsidies, continue to grow; yet States have been slow to help the least developed countries by meeting the commitments they made at successive development conferences.

Here, let me speak of the cotton initiative, whose purpose is to obtain compensation for harm caused by subsidies that have been detrimental to the economies of cotton-producing African countries. It is increasingly urgent to ensure respect for the laws of competition, which the States seen as the principal initiators and defenders of free markets now seem to be disregarding.

As if that were not enough, in addition to the inherent difficulties of the international economic environment, those very farmers are today confronting a threat of an entirely different scope: the invasions of locusts. This raises the spectre of famine throughout the Sahelo-Saharan countries. Chad is in a natural reproductive zone for locusts and is also considered a corridor for locust swarm migration.

The situation is of even greater concern because, in addition to the other difficulties, the areas exposed to locust invasion are the ones that are protecting the Sudanese refugees. Our countries have taken the appropriate measures, thanks to the assistance of our partners; we have thus been able to deal with the progress of the first locust swarms. However, the threat has not disappeared.

At the risk of having to manage a humanitarian crisis that could result from the destruction of food crops by the locusts, we must mobilize financial resources and the necessary technical and logistical means while we still have the time, in order to curb the scourge. We thank the countries and international

organizations that have helped my country, and I take this opportunity to reiterate my Government's appeal to the international community for vigorous action against the threat of locusts. Responses to the appeal will help us set up appropriate structures for preventive action.

While speaking of natural disasters, I must mention the consequences of tropical depressions that are doing a great deal of damage and that have, in the past few weeks, claimed thousands of victims among the populations of the Caribbean islands. We express our sympathy to those populations, and I would ask the wealthy nations to provide the needed assistance to help them recover from the disaster.

In addition to natural disasters, armed conflicts too play a part in exacerbating the social crises from which our people are suffering. In 2004, my country and the United Nations have engaged in intensive diplomatic activity related, inter alia, to the humanitarian and security situation along the border between Chad and the Sudan. That situation, which is the result of a conflict between the rebels of Darfur, and the central Government in Khartoum, is of serious concern to my Government. The scope of the hostilities and the violent excesses perpetrated against civilian populations by the various parties to the conflict, have provoked massive and continuous flows of Sudanese refugees to the eastern and north-eastern regions of Chad. That flow has consequences for our people and for the environment, whose ecosystems were already in a precarious state of fragility caused by the aridity of the soil and the climate.

The President of the Republic of Chad quickly understood the consequences of the conflict and made a commitment to help our brothers in the Sudan find a peaceful solution, by offering to mediate between the parties. He personally initiated the inter-Sudanese negotiations on the Darfur conflict, with the signature of the Abeche Agreement on 3 September 2003. That process was followed by the 8 April 2004 N'Djamena agreement on a humanitarian ceasefire, and the 25 April agreement on a joint commission; these will provide a framework for negotiations on a final and comprehensive settlement of the conflict.

In other words, we could not remain indifferent to the tragedy that the people in Darfur were experiencing. It is our duty, more than any other country, to help our brothers in the Sudan to reconcile. We have spared no effort to help President Omer Hassan A. Al-Bashir and his Government, while respecting the sovereignty of their country, to resolve the Darfur conflict.

Thus, we took the risk of exposing ourselves to criticism from the rebel movements, which accused us of favouritism, as well as the discontent of the Chadian people related to the people of Darfur. This clearly contradicts the widespread disinformation claiming that the Government of Chad might have supported some kind of rebellion against the legitimate authorities of the Sudan, with which our country has close ties of friendship and cooperation in all areas. We will never stop fulfilling our mission to mediate alongside the African Union to urge our Sudanese brothers to renounce war once and for all and to promote sincere dialogue in order to resolve the conflict.

In spite of the recent uncertainties due to the hardening of positions, we place our hope in the Abuja talks under the auspices of His Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, current Chairman of the African Union. We believe that the adoption of Security Council resolution 1564 (2004), whose full implementation by the Government of the Sudan is expected in order to facilitate conditions conducive to the return of populations to their homes, will be followed by complementary measures aimed at convincing the other parties to the Darfur crisis to take a constructive approach at the negotiating table. We hope that the international community will be firm with all sides in order to promote a successful conclusion of the process of a political settlement of the Darfur crisis.

Throughout the terrible times the populations along the border of Chad and the Sudan have endured, international solidarity has been evident. I must express the appreciation of the Government of the Republic of Chad for the many forms of assistance we have received from the international community, which has allowed us to help the refugees.

I would also like to call upon States and organizations represented here to convey to the appropriate authorities in their countries and organizations an appeal to continue or renew humanitarian assistance to the refugees, whether from southern Sudan or southern Central Africa, whom we are sheltering in the south of our country.

I would also like to ask the international community to help the populations of the host regions not only to provide shelter for the refugees but also to make possible the reconstruction of their socioeconomic structures that have been affected by the unexpected flow of refugees. The flow of refugees and their prolonged stay in Chad would — if we are not careful — have consequences which might be dangerous to the security of my country.

Having agreed to abide by the international commitments it has freely entered into, Chad is receiving the refugees and looking out for their safety. In the long term, the international support that my country enjoys should focus on promoting the voluntary return, within a short and reasonable time, of refugees to their countries of origin. International assistance to refugees must therefore be designed and conducted so as not to perpetuate the presence of the refugees in Chad.

While we are working together with the international community to ease the pain of the refugees on our soil, we say frankly that we can in no way tolerate Chad being used as a base for subversive actions, for acts of terrorism or for the conduct of hostile or destabilizing actions against the institutions of the refugees' countries of origin. Thus, the Government of Chad will act, with all the unambiguity reflected in its current position, against refugees who become involved in such activities.

The gravity of the humanitarian and security situation born of the crisis that is raging in Darfur has not deflected my country's attention from other similar concerns on the continent. We are following attentively and with great interest the evolution of other conflicts that are taking place in Africa and in other parts of the world. We are pleased to see the efforts being made within the African Union and the United Nations to find lasting solutions; we are available to help as best we can. Therefore, the Government of Chad has decided to respond to the needs outlined by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations by making available to the United Nations a contingent of 150 qualified men.

On this solemn occasion, how could we fail to recall the unjust and undemocratic situation that characterizes the structures of our Organization? I would like to say firmly that my country remains committed to the common African position regarding the restructuring of the United Nations, including the enlargement and reform of the Security Council in order to ensure equitable representation of all regions. All the initiatives taken by Secretary-General Kofi Annan regarding United Nations reform are much appreciated by my country, which awaits with interest the outcome of the deliberations under way. The objective is the revitalization of the United Nations. All suggestions should help us to improve the performance of the principal organs and the functioning of present and future funds and programmes.

To that end, my country would expect account to be taken of the concerns and viewpoints of Member States and groups of States that have been reiterated on many occasions in the Assembly. Chad awaits with equal interest the outcome of the study on globalization: the current characteristics and direction of globalization by no means enable weaker or transitional economies to benefit fully from the opportunities it offers.

Another injustice should be pointed out. I must draw the Assembly's attention to the question of the exclusion from our ranks of a large community of the 23 million men and women of the Republic of China on Taiwan. Those men and women, who increasingly are asserting themselves in international trade and are generating wealth throughout the world, deserve to be fully associated in decision-making on subjects and in areas with an impact on their lives and those of all humankind. The United Nations would have everything to gain and nothing to lose with their active participation in debates on the many topics of international concern. Their contribution would undoubtedly enrich the Assembly debates and would help us build the operational capacity of our world institutions, funds and programmes.

The distressing legacy of armed conflicts includes buried caches of abandoned munitions and unexploded ordnance and, in particular, anti-personnel mines. Referring to the danger of landmines, the Secretary-General has said that these abominable weapons, buried by the millions, are not only waiting silently to kill or maim innocent children and women, but their presence — or even the threat of the presence of one single landmine — can put a stop to crop cultivation, deprive an entire village of its livelihood and thus place one more obstacle along the difficult path to reconstruction and development. Chad is

actively participating in the preparations for the Ottawa Convention review conference soon to be held in Nairobi and will continue to act to eliminate all of these arms so as to attain the objective of an Earth without mines.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank, without exception, all the States and all the intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions that have helped us establish and implement our humanitarian demining programmes. We ask them for their continued generosity, and we ask them to extend their assistance to survivors among the victims of landmines, to help design and implement programmes enabling these individuals to be reintegrated socially and professionally. I appeal to all United Nations Member States to join in this humanitarian undertaking by acceding to the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Vall Ould Bellal, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania.

Mr. Ould Bellal (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased, Sir, to congratulate you and your friendly country, Gabon, on your well-deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. We remain convinced that your great skills and rich experience guarantee the success of our work. I would also like to thank your predecessor, Mr. Julian Hunte, who so ably guided the work of the previous session. I should like also to express my sincere congratulations to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and to his entire team, on the immense efforts they have exerted to achieve the noble ideals of our Organization.

Allow me to express our deep satisfaction at the activities undertaken since the last Assembly session, notably the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, held in New York in June, on the theme of "Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010". My country had the privilege of hosting the preparatory meeting for our subregion last April, bringing together government sectors and international partners, as well as regional civil society organizations.

We hail the efforts to define priorities and the measures needed to implement the recommendations of the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development, the decisions taken at the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development and the Millennium Development Goals. I should note here that those Goals will be reached only if the Group of Eight and the other industrialized countries pursue their joint efforts to provide greater support and assistance to developing countries. In this regard, I would also like to reaffirm my country's support for the New York Declaration on the Action Against Hunger and Poverty.

The achievement of the Development Goals and ensuring security and stability are closely linked to how we address the problem of violence and terrorism. Terrorism is a global problem, and its solution must also be global. The fight must be based on an intellectual and cultural vision of the complementarity of civilizations and on an absolute rejection of confrontation between countries.

It is important also to note the unjust disparity in the level of development between rich and poor countries, because poverty and social, scientific, technological underdevelopment are among the main causes of tension, violence and extremism. The growth of terrorism, and its resulting fear and destruction, obliges the international community to engage in closer dialogue, increased coordination and a concerted effort to face the dangers that threaten all humankind.

My country, Mauritania, firmly condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the taking and killing of hostages, and we reaffirm our commitment to combat that phenomenon, which is alien to our society and to our sacred Islamic values, which reject violence and extremism and which call for dialogue, understanding, tolerance and the acceptance of others.

It is clear that the repeated failure of the international community to fulfil its commitments with regard to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State living side by side with Israel, remains the main cause of insecurity and instability in the region and of the growth of the extremism and violence from which we all are suffering.

That is why it is high time that the international community — represented by the Security Council, the General Assembly and all relevant regional and

international actors, including the Quartet — work together to bring about peace and stability in the Middle East, which, together with the rest of the world, has suffered for so long from the destructive effects of war.

It is high time that we implement the Arab peace initiative, under which the Arab States guarantee comprehensive peace and the promise of normal relations to Israel in exchange for a complete withdrawal from all Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese territories up to the borders of 4 June 1967, the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just, consensual resolution of the refugee issue. Clearly, there is no way to achieve that noble goal except to carry out the peace process and to resume the negotiations on all tracks, in keeping with the Madrid terms of reference, the principle of land for peace, the road map and the relevant provisions of international law.

We are following with interest the development of the situation in Iraq, and we reaffirm our commitment to the unity, territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Iraq and to non-interference in its internal affairs. My country also reaffirms its support for the brotherly Iraqi people, its Interim National Council and its Interim Government in their efforts to overcome the difficulties hampering their aspirations to security, stability and the establishment of State institutions.

We are also following with interest the development of the situation in Darfur. We welcome the commendable efforts of the Sudanese Government, in cooperation with the African Union, the League of Arab States and the United Nations, with a view to resolving the humanitarian, security and political aspects of the crisis. We call upon all regional and international actors to support those efforts and to accord to the Sudanese Government the time it needs to honour its commitments without threats of armed intervention, the imposition of sanctions or any tendentious propaganda aimed at giving the Darfur problem an ethnic or sectarian dimension. In that regard, I welcome the positive results achieved following the peace negotiations held at Abuja and N'Djamena, sponsored by the African Union. I encourage all the parties to continue the dialogue and the negotiation process, since that is the only way to resolve the crisis.

I now turn to Western Sahara. Mauritania supports the efforts undertaken by the United Nations and its Secretary-General to arrive at a definitive settlement that brings stability to the region and enjoys the agreement of all the parties.

My country is strongly committed to contributing to relations of cooperation and solidarity within the framework of our integrated regional affiliations. We are deeply convinced of the need for the Arab Maghreb Union, which remains an indispensable strategic option and an ambitious project aimed at enabling the peoples of the region to achieve greater complementarity and solidarity. My country seeks to deepen dialogue, understanding and cultural contacts among civilizations through the five-plus-five approach and the Barcelona approach.

At the level of the African continent, we commend the solidarity and complementarity within the framework of the organization on the use of the Senegal River and the brotherly and friendly bilateral relations with West African countries. My country also welcomes the decisions taken recently by the institutions and organs of the African Union, particularly the formation of an African Parliament and a Peace and Security Council, which will constitute a framework that will enable us to transcend all current difficulties.

At the international level, Mauritania reaffirms its support for the People's Republic of China as the sole and legal representative of the Chinese people. In that regard, we appreciate the efforts of the Chinese Government aimed at achieving its reunification by peaceful means.

My country has the honour to preside over the current session of the League of Arab States at the level of Ministers for Foreign Affairs. I should like to stress that the Arab Summit reaffirmed at Tunis the resolve of all Arab States to pursue the reform process by deepening democracy, expanding political participation and promoting respect for human rights, the advancement of women and the understanding that such reform must be progressive, gradual and adapted to social and cultural traditions specific to the States of the region, not imposed from outside.

Mauritania is pursuing its efforts in that direction under the leadership of the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, and continues to work to establish the rule of law, good

governance and pluralistic democracy that promotes human rights, freedom of expression, and personal and general freedoms.

At the socio-economic level, we have adopted significant new laws, such as those dealing with labour and trafficking in persons and the introduction of broad reforms that would enable us to make progress in modernizing public administration to improve its performance, liberalizing private enterprise, promoting investment and providing basic services for our citizens, such as education, health and potable water.

The Charter of the United Nations reflects the common aspiration of the world's peoples to attain their fundamental development objectives and to ensure international peace and security. Clearly, the sweeping changes now taking place in the international arena call for the reform of United Nations structures with a view to expanding representation on the Security Council, thereby opening it up to key regions, such as Africa and Latin America, as well as significant groups, such as the Group of Arab States, and important industrialized countries that provide substantial contributions to the Organization, such as Germany and Japan, in order to respond to the new changes taking place and to enable the Council, thus restructured, to better reflect the realities and diversity of today's world.

We sincerely hope to see the international community work together to consolidate international solidarity in order to establish a new, just and more equitable world order that safeguards peace and security and provides a life of freedom and dignity for everyone.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ali Said Abdella, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Eritrea.

Mr. Abdella (Eritrea) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its current session. In light of the restraints on our time, I shall omit several acknowledgements and tributes that I should have liked to make and delve directly into matters of vital importance to my country, to the region of the Horn of Africa and, by extension, to all Member States of our global community.

My Government, of course, recognizes and is grateful for the vital contributions of the international community, including the United Nations, to promote peace in the aftermath of the war that Ethiopia declared against my country, using a place called Badme as a pretext for invasion.

The Algiers Peace Agreement, signed by the two parties in December 2000, was drafted and brokered by the United States, the European Union, the African Union and Algeria, among others. Furthermore, the international community has spent more than $700 million to date to maintain the peacekeeping force. More than 37 countries have contributed military personnel, which are involved in UNMEE in various capacities. We are indeed grateful for those contributions.

But, while we applaud those valuable contributions, we are duty-bound to express, with equal candour, our regret and dismay at the lack of resolute action by the international community at this critical time, when the entire process is on the brink of collapse. Had the international community respected its obligations and seen the process through with the requisite seriousness, the border would have been demarcated long ago. Today could have been an auspicious moment for our peoples to celebrate, from this rostrum, the resounding success of the United Nations peacekeeping effort. Instead, the dark clouds of war are once again gathering over my country because of Ethiopia's intransigence and the acquiescence of major Powers as concerns Ethiopia's violations of international law.

Allow me to recall some of the most salient tenets of the Algiers Peace Agreement (*A/55/686, annex*).

First, regarding the establishment and powers of the Arbitration Commission, article 4.2 of the Agreement states:

> "The parties agree that a neutral Boundary Commission composed of five members shall be established with a mandate to delimit and demarcate the colonial treaty boundary based on pertinent colonial treaties (1900, 1902 and 1908) and applicable international law. The Commission shall not have the power to make decisions *ex aequo et bono*."

Secondly, as concerns the final and binding nature of the decision, article 4.15 states:

> "The parties agree that the delimitation and demarcation determinations of the Commission shall be final and binding. Each party shall respect the border so determined, as well as the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the other party."

Thirdly, regarding punitive measures that should be taken against the violating party, paragraph 14 of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (*S/2000/601, annex*) states:

> "[The] OAU and the United Nations commit themselves to guarantee the respect for this commitment of the two parties until the determination of the common border ... This guarantee shall be comprised of
>
> > a) Measures to be taken by the international community should one or both of the parties violate this commitment, including appropriate measures to be taken under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations by the United Nations Security Council."

It has been more than two years now since the Boundary Commission announced its decision on the basis of the Algiers Peace Agreement. That legal decision was reached after 15 months of litigation, following the exchange of numerous memorandums and a two-week verbal hearing. The decision is final and binding in accordance with the aforementioned Peace Agreement. Furthermore, the decision is based on the fundamental African principle of the inviolability of inherited colonial boundaries, which are not of our making but which we can only respect unless we wish to open the Pandora's box of an endless cycle of bloody border conflicts.

My Government has accepted in good faith the Boundary Commission's decision, not because it has won in the litigation, but because we firmly believe that the only way to secure an enduring peace is through respect of the rule of law and the integrity of the arbitration decision. That is why my Government has been cooperating, and continues to cooperate, fully and unreservedly with the Boundary Commission in all its delimitation decisions and demarcation instructions.

Ethiopia, on the other hand, has categorically rejected the decision of the Boundary Commission. In a letter to the Security Council on 19 September last year, the Ethiopian Prime Minister declared that the work of the Commission was "in terminal crisis". The Prime Minister dismissed the decision of the Boundary Commission as totally illegal, unjust and irresponsible, and requested the Security Council to set up an alternative mechanism to demarcate the contested parts of the boundary.

Ethiopia, of course, has no reason whatsoever to reject the Boundary Commission decision. Apart from its treaty obligations, the fact is that Ethiopia has won, by its own admission, extra territories that never belonged to it. Those were the words of the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Council of Ministers on 13 April 2002, when the Boundary Commission announced its decision.

Ethiopia's belated and calculated rejection of the decision was an afterthought. It was tentative and cautious at first, but gained boldness and audacity when it realized that it could do so with impunity. The Prime Minister's letter informing the Security Council that Ethiopia totally rejected the decision of the Boundary Commission was written 16 full months after the decision was rendered. In a sense, Ethiopia's rejection has more to do with the conduct of the international community rather than any intrinsic problem of the decision itself.

Critical and encouraging factors in Ethiopia's rejection were the sympathetic dispositions towards it and the "winks and nods" of certain countries and some foreign missions in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's current arguments and excuses on the need to factor in human and physical geography and bogus concerns as to population dislocation or separation of villages and homes are so fallacious as to not even merit discussion. The legal basis for delimiting the boundary is unequivocal, and Ethiopia cannot inject new elements after the fact. Furthermore, boundaries in Africa, and for that matter elsewhere in the world, are not always carved out of natural rivers and ravines to exclude contiguous villages lying on either side of the boundary between two countries.

In the case of the Eritrea-Ethiopia boundary, in 1998 Ethiopia expelled 14,500 Eritreans who had inhabited 39 villages on the eastern part of the Badme line since the 1920s. Those people have spent the last several years in makeshift camps in western Eritrea. An additional 58,000 Eritreans remain displaced because Ethiopia continues to occupy our sovereign

territories. All in all, more than 90,000 Eritreans, and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin, were expelled from Ethiopia in 1998 because the Ethiopian Prime Minister declared that "Ethiopia has every right to expel any foreign citizen if it does not like the colour of their eyes". How can Ethiopia now invoke the possible dislocation of a few thousand settlers to prevent demarcation of the boundary and jeopardize regional peace?

In spite of Ethiopia's violations of the Peace Agreements, major Powers within the international community have not taken critical steps to persuade Ethiopia to uphold the rule of law and abide by its treaty obligations. On the contrary, Ethiopia is continuing to obtain massive humanitarian, economic and military support from major Powers. Full-fledged economic sanctions may not have been necessary, but the debt cancellation, budgetary support and other substantial injections of economic and humanitarian assistance extended to Ethiopia have not been linked to a positive performance in the peace process. As far as Eritrea is concerned, therefore, the problem is not Ethiopia's bad-faith conduct in the border dispute, but international silence and acquiescence with regard to its violations, which has, in turn, encouraged its intransigence.

It is regrettable that the United Nations Secretariat and some Powers have introduced — and continue to dwell on — tangential issues, instead of taking concrete action to push the peace process forward. Such notions are not only extraneous to the Algiers Peace Agreement, but, if they were to become operational, would actually subvert and derail the peace process and significantly contribute to tension and conflict. Here, I am referring to the related issues of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and the "dialogue" to renegotiate the final and binding decision of the Boundary Commission.

I would like to stress that the appointment of the Special Envoy occurred only a few weeks after Ethiopia had formally and officially rejected the Boundary Commission decision requesting the Security Council to create a new mechanism. While my Government did not see any benefit or rationale for that course of action, it did not reject the proposal outright. We sought unambiguous clarifications with regard to the mandate and functions of the Special Envoy through various communications, emphasizing that we could not possibly contemplate renegotiation of the decision in any form. Unfortunately, our efforts did not bear fruit, and the lack of clarity of the responses we received only reinforced our original suspicions. My Government has therefore informed the Secretary-General that it considers that the issue of the Special Envoy — which has eclipsed the key issue for almost a year now — to be a closed chapter and appealed to the Secretary-General to refocus international attention on Ethiopia's violations of the Algiers Peace Agreement and the rule of law.

In the same vein, the issue of bilateral dialogue with Ethiopia should be viewed and can be understood only in its proper perspective. Eritrea has no problem with the idea of fully normalizing its relations with Ethiopia and reviving good-neighbourly relations. We are neighbours, destined to live together and in harmony. But we cannot possibly put the cart before the horse and discuss economic or security issues, or other issues relating to cooperation, while Ethiopia is forcibly occupying our land in blatant breach of the Algiers Peace Agreement and the decision of the Boundary Commission. Indeed, Eritrea will not need the good offices of an intermediary in order to resume normal bilateral ties with Ethiopia once the critical border issue is resolved legally and peacefully. I must stress that the border issue cannot be the subject of sterile dialogue such as that sought by Ethiopia. That is legally untenable and practically impossible.

The cost of inaction by the international community to regional peace and stability will be enormous, and my Government sincerely hopes that the indifference that we have witnessed over the past two years will be rectified in time. Eritrea has shown maximum patience and restraint, even though its sovereign territories remain occupied by force. But patience has a limit — particularly given that the humanitarian burden is of great importance and that the situation in that regard has been unsustainable for a long time. Indeed, over 60,000 of our citizens continue to live in makeshift camps, unable to return to their home villages.

In his address to the General Assembly on 21 September 2004, the Secretary-General made a passionate appeal for respect for the rule of law at home and abroad. The people and the Government of Eritrea would like to thank him for that statement, which they subscribe to in its entirety and endorse without reservation. Eritreans continue to be victims of the violation of the rule of law as a result of Ethiopia's

rejection, with impunity, of the final and binding decision of an arbitration commission sanctioned by the United Nations and other organizations, as well as by other States.

Eritreans also fully agree that the rule of law begins at home, including at the United Nations. It must not be forgotten that the implementation of the Commission's decision was guaranteed by a treaty obligation signed by the Secretary-General on behalf of the United Nations. It is therefore essential to note that any stalemate in the demarcation process is a stalemate not between Eritrea, which has accepted the decision without any reservations or conditions, and Ethiopia, which has rejected it, but between Ethiopia and the United Nations, which has guaranteed implementation and provided for punitive action, under Chapter VII of the Charter, against the party that refuses to implement the Commission's decision.

The United Nations has the duty of enforcing the rule of law. This is a violation of the rule of law and demonstrates the collective failure of the United Nations to uphold the law and to instil respect for it in our fellow men and women. Ethiopia cannot be above the law; Eritrea should not be denied its protection, and the United Nations must employ its enforcement capacity for the rule of law by fulfilling its treaty obligations.

Before concluding, I would like to outline briefly the views of my Government on other regional problems. My Government warmly welcomes the progress made over the past few months in promoting reconciliation and lasting peace in Somalia. Although we are handicapped by the war imposed on us by Ethiopia, we have nonetheless continued to make modest contributions to a durable and peaceful resolution of Somalia's internal problem. Our approach has always hinged on supporting the Somalis as they try to find their own solutions and on preventing the fragmentation and Balkanization of Somalia, which have been driven by external, rather than internal, tendencies.

The magnitude of the humanitarian crisis in the Sudan is too well known to merit explanation here. But as the international community focuses on what is currently taking place in Darfur, what is often missed is the larger picture of regional destabilization and incalculable human suffering that the fundamentalist extremist regime has been fomenting for almost 15 years. Furthermore, the ramifications of the National Islamic Front's policies, which are based on extremist ideology, have not been confined to the Sudan but have affected several neighbouring countries, including my country. It is therefore essential that major Powers in the international community see the problem for what it is and assess it on the basis of what it portends.

In conclusion, I would like to restate the position of my Government on the relevant ongoing debate about the reform of the United Nations system. It is clear to us, as a matter that has been reinforced by our recent experience, that, despite many achievements, there are areas of critical shortfall that require reform and restructuring. We also believe that parameters and considerations that were relevant when the United Nations was established in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War need to be revisited and adjusted, in accordance with contemporary realities. Furthermore, representation in the Security Council must satisfy the criteria of reasonable regional representation and equity, as well as of the equality of sovereign nations, as enshrined in the Charter.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdurrahman Mohamed Shalghem, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mr. Shalghem (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. Your election is a testament to the greatness of our African continent.

I am pleased to address the Assembly and share the views of my country, Libya, on a number of serious and sensitive issues that we deem important for joint international action and increased universal cooperation.

Last year, we relinquished our right to speak to the President of the African Union in the expectation that he would speak for the entire Union. It seems, however, that the African Union has no post of Foreign Minister and that the Ministers of member States were therefore compelled to speak instead. Thus, I am obliged to speak now.

All States obviously agree that the current structure and the rules of procedure of the United

Nations are flawed, and all States agree on the need for reform. Indeed, before we can discuss reform in the Middle East, the former republics of the Soviet Union or any other area of the world, we must first reform the United Nations. Before we speak about lack of democracy in the world, we must first recognize the lack of democracy in the United Nations. Furthermore, because the General Assembly is the parliament of parliaments and the Security Council is the government of governments, we have no right to talk about democracy and reform in the world unless we first reform the structure of the United Nations.

The past 59 years have demonstrated that the General Assembly is merely a decorative body without a soul and that the authority lies with the Security Council, which controls all the work of the United Nations. It is the one and only authority. My country therefore proposes that the upcoming sixtieth session of the General Assembly should be decisive and important, and that invitations should be extended to all world leaders to participate. We should announce that decisions on radical reform for the United Nations will be taken at the sixtieth session. God willing, President Muammar Al-Qadhafi, in what will be his first visit to the General Assembly, will attend that session, which will be a historic milestone involving a confrontation with the grave and unjust situation currently prevailing at the United Nations.

We propose that the sixtieth session be held in Geneva — the geographical centre of the world — to facilitate the attendance of all world leaders and presidents, even if additional funds have to be allocated in order to convene the meeting in Geneva. My country is ready to contribute financial support for that endeavour.

There are two options before us. Our first option is to transfer the authority to invoke Chapters VI and VII of the Charter from the Security Council to the General Assembly. If that cannot be done, we have no choice but to declare the General Assembly null and void and to stop pouring money into this moribund body.

Our second option is to increase the membership of the Security Council by allocating seats to new entities such as the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Latin America. In addition, the right of veto will have to be reviewed and made subject to new rules at the same time as the membership of the Security Council is expanded.

We warn that, unless these reforms are implemented, the United Nations will cease to exist, as unilateral actions are taking place outside the confines of the United Nations.

The African Union must have a permanent seat on the Security Council. That seat will be held by the Union's members in rotation.

As the sixtieth session of the General Assembly approaches, Libya is presenting a unique, bold and strong initiative to eliminate its programmes of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear and chemical weapons, and hand over related equipment to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Libya played the central role in the establishment of the African Union and contributed effectively to the liberation of colonized and oppressed peoples. Libya, with its 2,000-kilometre coastline along the Mediterranean Sea, is at the centre of the world and is both a place of conflict and a haven for tourism. The Mediterranean Sea without Libya is inconceivable, as is the south Mediterranean coast without Libya. Libya gave birth to the third universal theory — the middle ground between capitalism and communism — and presented the world with the Green Book, which resolves the political, economic and social problems of society in its three sections. Accordingly, Libya deserves to have a permanent seat on the Security Council.

Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi presented a proposal to world leaders, which they all approved. The proposal calls for the establishment of a committee of wise men, consisting of President Nelson Mandela, President Mikhail Gorbachev and President Bill Clinton, that would serve as an authority for resolving the conflicts of our world. The United Nations should adopt a resolution supporting that proposal.

We must all continue to combat terrorism. If we want to eliminate terrorism, we must first eliminate its causes and not simply pursue its isolated operations. We must attack its root causes.

If we want oil supplies and prices to remain stable, we must prevent wars and potential conflicts from occurring near oil fields.

Finally, Colonel Al-Qadhafi will soon address the issue of United Nations reform on his web site: www.alqadhafi.org.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Ramos-Horta (Timor-Leste): In view of time constraints, I shall share an abbreviated version of my speech. The full text is being distributed in the Hall. Please forgive me for skipping the usual formal greetings to all the deserving dignitaries.

I first walked into this building in December 1975, in the midst of a North American winter, having never seen snow in my life, to appear before the Security Council. I learned then, and since, that not all United Nations resolutions are implemented. But I also learned that, in spite of its shortcomings and failings, the United Nations offers us hope and that we must cling to that hope, for it gives us the strength and the courage to continue.

When the Secretary-General visited Timor-Leste in May 2002 to preside over the formal transfer of sovereignty to our elected President, I said to him: "Mr. Secretary-General, you are going to lose your job as President of Timor-Leste". I can assure members that Kofi Annan did not seem too upset to be relinquishing that unpaid and difficult job. We thank him for his wise stewardship of Timor-Leste's transition to independence.

We cannot fail to pay tribute to our beloved friend, Sergio Vieira de Mello, who was brutally murdered in Iraq just over a year ago. Our people wept over his death, but Sergio will always live in us. His passage through Timor-Leste, his charisma, energy and smile will be with us forever. Our tribute goes also to all the United Nations personnel who lost their lives in our country and in many other difficult regions around the world.

We offer our sincere condolences and solidarity to Russia, Spain, Indonesia and Australia — the latest victims in a seemingly endless catalogue of barbarity committed by fanatics.

It was only a little over two years ago that Secretary-General Kofi Annan handed over power to our elected President. Since then, we have made real progress in several sectors, such as public administration, education and health. Yet, we are failing in other areas.

The most fragile sector of the Administration in Timor-Leste is the judiciary. We have very few trained judges, prosecutors or lawyers. We are committed to creating a strong and independent judiciary, but that achievement is still many years off. We thank those countries that have assisted us in improving our judiciary and we implore them to continue their efforts for many years to come.

Our economy is limping along, although it is doing much better than anticipated. We are confident that in two to three years we will experience strong economic growth as a result of revenues from oil and gas, as well as capital investment in public infrastructure, including roads, bridges, ports and airports, telecommunications, public housing, health, agriculture, fisheries and tourism. We should then be able to begin drastically reducing unemployment and poverty.

Here we wish to congratulate the Indonesian people and their leaders for their great experiment in democracy. Few imagined in 1999 that within only a few years the fourth largest nation in the world — and the largest Muslim country — would emerge as a vibrant democracy.

Talks are under way between Australia and Timor-Leste to rectify our differing interpretations of international law and State practice as regards maritime boundaries between coastal States. Timor-Leste shares the view of the majority of the international community that, where there are overlapping claims between two coastal States, the principle of equidistance should apply.

Allow me now to address some issues that are of concern to us. In the past 20 years or so, our world has been the stage for several major conflicts, including the invasion of Iran by Saddam Hussein in the 1980s, which resulted in the death of over a million people. Chemical and biological weapons were unleashed on both civilians and combatants. Soon after the end of the Iraq-Iran war, the same regime in Baghdad launched another invasion, this time against the State of Kuwait. Most of us have now relegated the Cambodian tragedy of the 1970s to a footnote in our intellectual memory, but let us not forget the almost universal indifference of the international community

to the genocide unleashed by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia.

Like many of you, and millions of peace marchers, we are opposed to violence and wars. But we must ask ourselves some troubling questions. Should we oppose the use of force even in the face of genocide and ethnic cleansing? In the eternal dilemma of war and peace there are pacifists and idealists who oppose the use of force under any circumstances and there are the realists who support the use of force under certain circumstances, namely, if it has been sanctioned by the Security Council. Those who are absolutely against the use of force have been unable to articulate a better strategy for dealing with the savagery of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Patient diplomacy lasts as long as it lasts; it might bear fruit, or it might not. Genocide, however, continues as we can see in the Sudan where thousands of our fellow human beings are dying right now.

In the tragic case of Cambodia in the 1970s, the world knew that an evil regime was deliberately purging the nation and murdering hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings. Yet, the Security Council never even discussed the Khmer Rouge genocide. Around the same time as the Cambodian tragedy, genocide was taking place on the African continent, in Uganda. The Security Council neither debated nor took any action on the situation in Uganda under Idi Amin. It required the moral courage of a Julius Nyerere of the United Republic of Tanzania to put an end to Idi Amin's genocidal rule. We would ask, if there had been a lone world leader with the moral courage to order his country's armed forces to intervene in Rwanda in 1994, would he have been hailed as a saviour or vilified as an aggressor?

In selectively recalling some of the most flagrant cases of our collective failure to prevent wars and genocide, our sole intention is to provoke reflection on the failings and weaknesses of the United Nations with a view to exploring ways of making our Organization a more effective custodian of world peace.

Allow us to add some thoughts to the ongoing debate as to how we can realize an improved United Nations. We wish, however, to preface our views on United Nations reform by stating that we do not believe that a simple expansion of Security Council membership will suffice to strengthen the United Nations. It may make the Council more representative by better reflecting current global demographics and power-balances, but it will not necessarily make it more effective.

That said, there is a clear need to expand membership in the Security Council for non-permanent and permanent members. Timor-Leste fully supports the Franco-German initiative on United Nations reforms. We also believe that the new expanded Security Council should include countries like Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Brazil and one or two from the African continent. But, to reassure you, I should add that Timor-Leste is not seeking a permanent seat in the Security Council for itself — please do not worry about that.

We particularly support permanent membership status for Indonesia because we believe in the need for balanced representation within the Security Council, encompassing all the world's major civilizations and faiths. Non-inclusion of Indonesia — the largest secular Muslim country in the world — as a new permanent member would again leave the Security Council with a predominantly Christian representation.

Incidentally, my Government has already received requests for support for a seat in Council for as far ahead as 2020 and 2024. Moreover, on the basis of the two-year rotation arrangement, it seems that Timor-Leste, and many other small nations, will only be able to offer its services to the Security Council somewhere in 2049. Incidentally, we are very touched that many delegations have already expressed support for Timor-Leste for 2049.

The world is faced with a growing AIDS pandemic, the epicentre of which is now shifting to Asia. Moreover, malaria and tuberculosis have been with us for many generations, yet there is no real commitment of resources that will enable our scientists and societies to address those epidemics.

The combined official development assistance (ODA) of the rich industrialized countries does not exceed US$ 50 billion annually. Compare that with the more than US$ 300 billion those countries provide in subsidies to their farmers and industries.

Weapons-producing countries are flooding the world with all types of arms that fuel conflicts. There must be a strict code of conduct on weapons exports aimed at reducing the flow of conventional weapons to poor countries and regions in conflict.

We in Timor-Leste do not wish to sound ungrateful, but we have reason to be sceptical about ODA that ends up back in the donor metropolis with only a fraction of that much-publicized aid benefiting the recipient country. There has to be a thorough reform of ODA with a view to ensuring that developing countries actually receive what is pledged. We wonder sometimes about the usefulness of the endless meetings, study trips, evaluations, feasibility studies and other activities, when, in reality, all the information required can be downloaded from the Internet by a 7-year-old child. Actually my 10-year-old niece, Sarah, does most of the Internet searches for me and instead of paying an international consultant something like $1,000 a day in consulting fees, she is happy with two scoops of chocolate ice cream.

We join with the leaders of Brazil, Chile, France, Spain and others in urging the rich of the North to allocate 0.7 per cent of their national wealth to ODA, thus meeting the target set by the United Nations. It is perplexing that only four small rich countries have met and/or exceeded that modest target.

Europe and the United States should gradually eliminate all agricultural subsidies to their farmers that kill competition and market access of poor countries. We understand the political difficulties faced by some friends in Europe and the United States when dealing with the issue of subsidies. Hence, we believe that developing countries, the European Union and the United States should be able to reach a reasonable compromise on this issue.

We conclude our remarks with reference to some international situations. Regarding the ongoing conflict in Western Sahara, we endorse the comments made by His Excellency President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, a country that has contributed enormously to the liberation of the African continent. On this issue, our Government is guided by Algeria and the African Union.

We appeal to our senior Asian leaders, in particular, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to redouble their efforts to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Myanmar.

On the subject of sanctions, we wish to appeal to our friends in the United States Congress to rise above their parochial politics and lift all forms of sanctions on Cuba.

There is deep-seated resentment and anger among Muslims and many non-Muslims around the world over Israel's policies that thwart Palestinian right to a dignified existence and homeland.

The two-State solution agreed upon by all sides has to be rapidly resurrected and implemented as a first step towards durable peace in the region. The Palestinian intifada and suicide-bombing, as well as the Israeli policy of annexation and retaliation, have deepened the anger and hatred. There has to be a way out.

We hope that the United States, which initiated the war in Iraq and gallantly freed the Iraqi people from a tyrant, will go half-way and meet those on the other side of the debate. The United States and its allies should not shoulder the burden of Iraq alone.

The Euro-Atlantic partnership is the single most important pillar of the world's security and economic well-being. Americans and Europeans share the same values of democracy and freedom. Surely, they are wise enough to overcome their differences, however deep, and give the Iraqi people a chance to finally be free and at peace among themselves and with their neighbours. May God Almighty Bless You All.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Charles-Hervé Wénézoui, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Francophonie of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Wénézoui (Central African Republic) *(spoke in French)*: Allow me at the outset to extend my warm congratulations upon your election to the presidency of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. That election is a resounding tribute by the international community to Gabon, that brother country, for its singular leadership role in Africa, and for the personal commitment of President Omar Bongo Ondimba that has enabled Central Africans to be reconciled today, for which we are most grateful. Your great experience and ability as a diplomat and a statesman assure us of the success of our work.

His Excellency François Bozizé, President of the Republic and Head of State of my country, whose faith in the ideals of this Organization are unwavering, wishes you all success. As you might expect, my delegation will be fully with you in your endeavours. I would like to recall the competence with which your

predecessor, Mr. Julian Hunte of Saint Lucia, conducted the work of the fifty-eighth session.

Allow me to extend to Secretary-General Kofi Annan the appreciation of the Central African Republic for his endeavours to strengthen peace wherever it is threatened and his resolve to find ways and means to preserve the authority and credibility of the United Nations, which has been so sorely tried in recent years.

Before making its contribution and offering its thoughts on the state of the world, my delegation would like to join with all those who have expressed their sympathy to the populations that have fallen victim to natural disasters taking place in parts of the Pacific and on the American continent, which have left a woeful train of destruction in their path.

The major issues of the world today — international peace and security, combating poverty, development, the defence and promotion of human rights, protection of the environment and health — cannot find a lasting solution save through the common efforts of the international community through United Nations. To echo the expressive words of the Secretary-General in his 2002 report entitled Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change, "The challenge ahead is to strengthen our capacity for collective action and thus forge a common destiny in a time of accelerating global change (A/57/387, *para.* 2)".

In that context, multilateralism, which is the main guarantee of the participation of all nations in international affairs, must be safeguarded and strengthened at all costs. The spread of crisis flashpoints, the radicalization of international terrorism and organized crime, growing poverty and the spread of endemic diseases — all of those things should convince us that only active international solidarity is capable of ensuring stability and security for our world.

The tenacity with which terrorism is defying the international community in so many different ways is indeed disturbing. That scourge knows no borders, race, or religion. The attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York and Washington, 11 March 2004 in Spain and 2 September 2004 in Russia are only its latest expressions. Given the complexity of that phenomenon, we must arrive at a collective response to what has become a common menace. However, because our countries lack adequate means to combat that scourge, the essential problem of cooperation by the richer countries arises in order to obtain better equipment for detection, identification, surveillance and control on our land, sea and air borders. Similarly the fight against transnational organized crime also calls for large-scale cooperation under the aegis of the special fund for cooperation provided for by United Nations conventions.

The difficult present international economic context has negatively affected the developing economies in general and African economies in particular. Stiff international trade competition, intensified protectionist practices, fluctuating currencies, the burden of debt — all these are handicaps that are slowing the development of our countries.

In Cancun last year, members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) tried to relaunch efforts towards the liberalization of trade. We must continue to seek solutions to overcome the failure of Cancun and ensure the success of the Doha round of trade negotiations. The 2004 WTO meeting in Geneva is proof that we must not stand idly by when faced with the policy of agricultural subsidies. The Millennium Declaration, the outcome of the Johannesburg Summit and the Monterrey Consensus have laid out the path to be followed and the goals to be pursued in order to establish a true world partnership for development.

Since the last General Assembly session, the world has undergone a series of changes exacerbating an already deteriorated situation as a result of threats to peace and security and a growing number of points of conflict and tension. An example is the situation in the Middle East, which is a source of deep concern. Indeed, despite the transfer of powers to the new Iraqi authorities on 29 June, the spiral of violence continues uncontrollably, fuelling the Iraqi people's resentment of the international community. The recent appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Iraq means that the United Nations has a central role to play in the political reconstruction process there. However, the Central African Republic ardently hopes for the implementation of proposals already made by France, in cooperation with the Russian Federation, for an international conference on Iraq, within the framework of the United Nations.

In Israel, the international community must continue to support the action of the Quartet to restore peace between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. There is no alternative to the road map, which calls for parallel advances in the three areas of security, politics and economics. In Africa, despite certain successes such as the return to peace in Angola, Sierra Leone and — little by little — in Liberia, the African continent is still a source of deep concern. The surge in armed conflicts, the tensions and the instabilities are becoming a recurrent phenomenon. While the third Accra meeting favourably restarted the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire and gave rise to new hope, other sources of conflict are surfacing here and there.

The Darfur crisis in the Sudan continues to mobilize the international community's attention due to the large movements of populations towards the borders with Chad and the insecurity that persists there. My Government is following with particular interest the developments in the situation in Darfur due to the humanitarian and security implications for the Central African Republic, which borders on the Sudan and Chad.

In the Central African Republic, we support the initiatives taken, since the Chadian mediation, through international forums, which have taken over from it in the framework of the African Union and the United Nations. We encourage the Sudanese Government — which has proved its readiness — and the parties involved to follow the path of wisdom based on the dialogue established by President Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the African Union, and thus spare the brotherly Sudanese people more suffering, since Security Council sanctions would only worsen their suffering.

The massacre of 160 refugees in Gatumba on 14 August 2004 on the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi sparked widespread indignation and exacerbated an already delicate situation in that part of the Great Lakes region. However, our conviction is that despite the setbacks, the various agreements between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the one hand, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda on the other, as well as the historic agreements of Sun City, have finally made progress towards peace irreversible in the Great Lakes region.

That, in any case, is the purpose of our active participation in the preparatory process for the international conference on peace, security and development of the Great Lakes region and our contribution to the stability pact that will emerge from it. This is within the framework of the global, integrated and concerted approach sought by the United Nations, which has the advantage of pursuing regional solutions that will reach beyond the geographical borders of the six countries of the Great Lakes region.

I would like to touch on the situation in my own country, the Central African Republic. Proclaimed independent on 13 August 1960, my country has gone through relatively brief periods of political and social progress, linked by long periods of economic stagnation and even retreat, justifying the opinions of Afro-pessimists about its chaotic development. As with many other African States, a series of coups marked our political development. Some of these were palace coups and others involved a true popular revolution characterized by both the crystallization of social aspirations they unleashed and the political changes they brought about, such as the Carnation Revolution of Portugal in 1974. The changes of 15 March 2003 were of that type. They were popular movements carried forward by social forces that were as different from each other as were the involved political parties, labour unions, religious bodies, non-governmental organizations and the army.

I am pleased once again to pay tribute to the resolute action of our Organization and that of the whole international community, which spared no effort before 15 March 2003 to find a happy solution to the Central African crisis, mobilizing the Security Council; the French-speaking world; the central organ of the former Organization of African Unity (OAU) for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts; the heads of State of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, especially President El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba; the Economic Community of Central African States; and the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States.

For more than a year, the Central African people have been trying to rebuild their broken unity, while the Government pursues the restoration of security throughout its territory. Confidence is growing with both our bilateral and multilateral foreign partners. Constitutional legality will be established at the end of

free and transparent elections to take place in early 2005. These are the main points of the timetable that the consensual transitional administration set up in June 2003 and that it has been pursuing ever since, in keeping with its commitments.

Indeed, the national transitional council, a provisional parliament established in July 2003, is representative of all of the socio-political forces of the nation and fulfils a legislative function, including the adoption of legislation and the oversight of governmental activities.

The timetable for the transition also provided for the organization of a national dialogue. For nearly two months, from September to October 2003, all of the active forces of the nation came together in this forum to search together for the deep causes of what has divided us for so long. From these meetings emerged recommendations, the main points of which underlie the activities of our Government today and the fundamental law of our country, on which our people are preparing to vote through a referendum. An organ that was specifically created to oversee the application of these recommendations, the national dialogue follow-up committee, is now pursuing its mission.

An independent joint electoral commission, made up of representatives of political parties, civil society and the administration, was also set up, which has just published the timetable for a future referendum and elections as follows: 30 November 2004, constitutional referendum; 30 January 2005, legislative and presidential elections, first round; 27 February 2005, second round; 14 March 2005, announcement of results.

The mission of the present transitional Government is to bring about conditions permitting a return to normal democratic life in the Central African Republic. However, the grave financial difficulties faced by my country do not enable it to face alone the costs of these various elections. Of the 5.5 billion CFA francs necessary to finance these elections, we thus far have only 3.5 billion. I would address an appeal for assistance to enable us to organize the elections under proper conditions and thus bring about a rapid return to constitutional order.

As of now, my Government sincerely thanks the brother countries and international organizations that have so generously contributed to financing this process, especially France, the People's Republic of China, the European Union and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community. The support that the international community will provide to this very difficult and delicate phase in the history of the Central African Republic will be necessary to conclude this consensual transition. Our common dedication to democracy prompts me to believe that this appeal by the people and Government of my country will be heeded.

The challenges to be overcome in fulfilling the great hopes inspired by the changes of 15 March 2003 are many and pressing. These same challenges prompted the establishment of an agenda — a road map — that is focused on three major points: first, consensual governance for a rapid return to constitutional order; secondly, restoration of security and an effective return to peace; and, thirdly, combating poverty. The measures adopted by the new authorities, as they are outlined above, will lead to the restoration of peace and national reconciliation and were endorsed by the Central African people and rightly welcomed by the international community.

Today, thanks to the re-establishment and restructuring of our security and defence forces, the presence of the multinational force from the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, with France providing logistical support, and assistance from friendly countries, in particular France, Libya, the Sudan, the People's Republic of China and Morocco, as well as the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States, we can say that the process of making the whole Central African territory secure has made significant progress. Efforts are still needed to ensure full security before the elections take place. But the relief felt by the population and the hopes inspired by the changes of March 2003 will be gravely compromised if the commitments undertaken in this regard by the international community since May 2000 are not realized.

It is also essential that we attack the economic and financial problems as part of the struggle against poverty. From that perspective, the Central African Republic offers its full support to the Declaration on Action against Hunger and Poverty, adopted in New York on 20 September 2004 as a result of a joint initiative by President Chirac and President Ignacio Lula da Silva.

The post-conflict programme that my Government, working with the international financial institutions, has just drawn up provides a sound basis for the reforms that are necessary if my country is to have greater opportunities for success in the field of reconstruction.

The considerable efforts made at the national level and the steadfast support of the friends of the Central African Republic, including France, the People's Republic of China and the countries members of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, have helped to lift the burden that salary arrears imposed on the transition process, with the result that the people of the Central African Republic will emerge stronger and more united.

I could not conclude without touching upon a subject with regard to which all those who have spoken have been unanimous: if we are to make progress in this era, the United Nations must undertake a rational reform — a reform that is necessary if the Organization is to strengthen its role and enhance its effectiveness.

That reform effort must begin by reconfiguring the Security Council — the central organ entrusted with the major task of dealing with issues of peace and security. From the perspective of the delegation of the Central African Republic, the initiative of France and Germany calling for a permanent seat for Germany, and the similar appeal in favour of such seats for Japan, Africa and Latin America, should be given serious consideration.

Furthermore, the proposal of the Chairman-in-Office of the Economic Community of Central African States, President Denis Nguesso, calling for a political presence in the United Nations in the person of a representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa, is also worth consideration.

The Central African Republic will support proposals for reform submitted by the Secretary-General insofar as they strengthen the role of the Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security and the resolution of international issues on the basis of the principles of dialogue and multilateral cooperation.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vinci Niel Clodumar, Chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Nauru.

Mr. Clodumar (Nauru): It gives me great pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of His Excellency Ludwig Scotty, President of the Republic of Nauru, who had to cancel his trip to New York at the last minute due to pressing matters at home. President Scotty has asked that I convey to the Assembly the warm greetings and good wishes of the people and the Government of Nauru, and his warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the stewardship of the Assembly. We assure you of Nauru's fullest cooperation in the deliberations that are ahead of us.

Through you, Mr. President, my delegation joins previous speakers in congratulating Foreign Minister Julian Hunte of Saint Lucia for a productive fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly and for his exemplary performance. As a member of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Nauru is extremely proud to be associated with Saint Lucia and the Caribbean Community, and it just goes to show that, as is the case of our coconut trees, our potential is great. However, a lack of resources has limited the capacity to flourish of many more people like Julian Hunte from the AOSIS region who are serving or have served in international office.

We congratulate the Secretary-General for his continued commitment to multilateralism as a means of resolving our common problems and for his report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1) over the past 12 months. However, it is discouraging to note that peacekeeping activities have had to increase rather than decrease. Human rights and humanitarian norms continue to be violated as a result of armed conflict and terrorism. Atrocious acts of terrorism against innocent civilians, particularly women and children, continue to tear the fabric of civility and the moral values on which each and every society on this planet is founded.

Nauru sympathizes with those countries and peoples who have suffered loss as a result of conflict and terrorist acts. Nauru encourages peace in its Asia-Pacific neighbourhood, and expresses the hope that, whatever their differences, China and Taiwan can resolve them peacefully for the sake of the region's continued peace, stability and prosperity.

We support the Secretary-General's bold statement of position with respect to the mitigation of armed conflicts generally, and those on the African continent and in the Middle East in particular. We are pleased to hear that, for the remainder of his term in

office, he will be focusing mainly on strengthening the rule of law and transitional justice. Nauru supports the position the Secretary-General set out in his statement last week at the 3rd meeting, when he said

> "It is by reintroducing the rule of law, and confidence in its impartial application, that we can hope to resuscitate societies shattered by conflict. It is the law, including Security Council resolutions, which offers the best foundation for resolving prolonged conflicts — in the Middle East, in Iraq and around the world."

The democratization of governance, the application of accountability and transparency and the protection of minorities and the vulnerable are complementary elements of ruling under law.

Nauru, like other Member States, looks forward with anticipation to the report of the Secretary-General on the findings of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to be finalized later this year. The Panel has been charged with the task of reviewing threats to peace and security, as well as other global challenges, insofar as they may influence or connect with those threats. Nauru continues to believe that multilateralism is the key to resolving contemporary problems in all of their complexity. Hence, it is important that the recommendations of the High-level Panel reinforce that point and that the proposals are doable and add value to the reform programmes that are already in the pipeline, including the revitalization of the General Assembly.

My delegation has stated in previous debates that it agrees fully with the reform of the Security Council. The fresh approach initiated by the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session has, to some extent, injected life back into the debate by focusing on key elements of the reform. It is our hope that the Bureau will continue the push for the further convergence of views by refining the choices that we made during the fifty-eighth session. The formation of an informal group of countries with aspirations to permanent seats in an expanded Security Council is interesting, and could prove to be a catalyst, expediting the debate on expansion. Nauru can and will support the aspirations of Germany, Japan and India to a permanent seat in an expanded Security Council.

It is my delegation's firm view, however, that progress is being held hostage by those countries that insist that the expansion should not be done without either eliminating or modifying the veto power accorded to permanent members of the Security Council. Unless this difference in approach is reconciled, time and energy spent on other elements of the reform will be futile.

The revitalization of the General Assembly must have at its heart the maximization of opportunity for equitable representation by all Member States in the major organs of the United Nations and its committees and to ensure that their programme of work allows for the full participation of members, particularly the small States. In that regard, the proposal to split the work of the Main Committees of the General Assembly into two segments over a six-month period would allow small States like Nauru, which has only two diplomatic staff, to increase its participation. Nauru would therefore support such a proposal when further deliberations take place later in the session.

Nauru would note that its position is consistent with the United Nations core principle of universality, which calls on us all to be ever-mindful of the views of those countries seeking expanded responsibilities in international affairs. Countries that have sterling records in democracy, human rights, peace and the principle of freedom should have their achievements, as well as their capacities, appropriately recognized.

As a small island developing State in the Pacific Ocean, Nauru aligns itself with the interventions already made by the leaders of countries of the Alliance of Small Island States who have spoken before me on the concerns and challenges that we, the small-island big-ocean developing States, are facing. Nauru bears all the unique characteristics of a small island State: smallness in both land area and population, lack of resources, remoteness and vulnerability to exogenous forces, whether man-made or natural.

The devastation of Niue by Cyclone Heta and the disastrous hurricane destruction in Caribbean countries this year are stark reminders of the vulnerability of island States. Nauru joins others in expressing its deepest sympathy for the loss of life and property in the affected countries of the Caribbean and the southern coastal states of the United States of America.

Against that background, my delegation would like to focus on what it considers to be a spanner in the wheel of negotiations on an outcome strategy paper for the International Meeting to Review the

Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in Mauritius. It appears to us that the programme for political recognition of the special case of small island developing States (SIDS), as outlined at the Barbados Conference in 1994, and reinforced in New York during the five-year review held in 1999, as well as in chapter VII of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, has taken a backseat in the negotiations to generic undertakings made at other international conferences on development since 1999 — in particular, the Millennium Development Goals of 2000 and the Monterrey Consensus of 2002. Benchmarking the SIDS outcome strategy paper to the latter agreed texts would be hypocrisy of a high order insofar as political acceptance of SIDS as a special case is concerned. Indeed, the slow progress in the implementation by many small island developing States of the measures called for in those texts is but a true reflection that our problems are SIDS-specific and go deeper than the generic issues of development.

Nauru is also concerned that some of the development partners would skew the review into one addressing SIDS-Millennium Development Goal performance instead of SIDS performance on the Barbados Programme of Action. I believe that our concern has to an extent been warranted and therefore my delegation would like to use this opportunity to remind our partners that the review is about identifying and solving the failure of small island developing States to accomplish agreed development programmes under the Barbados Plan of 1994; and it's about how you, our development partners, can help SIDS to attain those goals. It is therefore our sincere hope that the third and critical round of negotiations scheduled in early October will be conducted in the right spirit and with better understanding.

The Pacific Islands Forum continues to be the vehicle for regional cooperation and collaboration among the 16 Pacific Island countries of the Central and Western Pacific. It approved the terms of reference for the Pacific plan at the Apia Forum last month to revitalize the Forum and to make it more effective in its response to the needs of the peoples of the region. Issues such as climate change, peace and security, the economic and social development of our peoples and the protection and sustainable use of the environment and our natural resources are still the priorities of the Forum.

Nauru welcomes the admission of the Kingdom of Thailand as the thirteenth member of the Forum's dialogue partners. That group of countries, along with the European Union, individual member countries of the EU and the United Nations specialized agencies and programmes, are critical to the development of the region as they provide the necessary financial backing. During the session, cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum will be considered under item 56 (q) of the General Assembly's agenda. The Pacific Island Forum group at the United Nations looks forward to working closely with Member States to develop and expand the areas of its cooperation with them, pursuant to a draft resolution that will be presented to the Assembly in due course.

Nauru, like the other low-lying small island States, sees the Kyoto Protocol as its means of salvation from the sea-level rise and climate change that threaten to devastate its already fragile ecosystem, so essential to the livelihood and culture of its people. My delegation understands that the Russian Federation stands between the Kyoto Protocol's coming into force and its continuing to linger in the wilderness. Nauru welcomes the statement by the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation that President Putin has ordered serious consideration of Russia's ratification of the Protocol. That is a step forward from last year.

A healthy Pacific Ocean and the sustainable use of its natural resources, including the highly migratory fish stocks, are also critical to our livelihood. We in the Pacific have "walked the walk" on those issues by the development of an ocean policy to guide us in the management of our part of the Pacific Ocean and to form the framework for future regional ocean-related initiatives. The Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, which provides a comprehensive regime for the management of the region's highly migratory fish stock both in our exclusive economic zone and on the high seas, has come into force. In addition, the trans-shipment of nuclear waste through our waters is of great concern to many of the island countries because of the damage it could cause.

One of the positive outcomes of the Pacific Islands Forum meeting last month was the decision of the Forum leaders to intervene in the internal economic crisis in Nauru at the request of our Government and

consistent with the terms of reference of the Forum's Biketawa Declaration of 2000. Our crisis lies largely in the fact that two thirds of our workforce are in the employ of the Government and its agencies. Those employees have not been paid a regular salary for over a year now. At irregular intervals either A$ 100 in food vouchers or A$ 30 to A$ 50 in cash to purchase food has been paid out, compared with the basic wage of A$ 350 — or about US$ 250 — per fortnight. The average family size on Nauru is around six people. A$ 50 cash fortnightly is equivalent to US$ 0.42 per family member per day and is well below the United Nations-defined abject poverty level of US$ 1 a day.

The fact that many Nauruans can harvest food from the sea and the land, however limited, coupled with our culture and tradition of sharing, has meant that despite the lack of cash our people eat at least once a day. The real problem concerns the level of daily nutritional intake, particularly for children, as one cannot buy imported commodities such as fruits and vegetables and hygienic supplies. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that Nauru imports 90 per cent of all food and other essential items. Accordingly, food security in the medium to long term is a serious concern as there is no form of agricultural activity on Nauru.

Nauru's recovery cannot be possible without the establishment of reputable financial institutions on Nauru and the lifting of the restrictions on financial transactions between the international community and Nauru. That will not happen if Nauru continues to be subjected to countermeasures and blacklisting by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Despite the outlawing of the registration of foreign banks some 12 months ago, Nauru has not been successful in its appeal no longer to be the subject of countermeasures as a first step, although there has been incremental progress towards that goal over the same period. Following the visit by the International Monetary Fund early this year, Nauru has, for the fourth time, passed an anti-money-laundering law that now supersedes previous laws. We have participated in FATF regional reviews but, despite strong support provided by actions taken on advice, we seem to have failed at the plenary review.

As I speak, the Parliament of Nauru is considering the passage of three bills addressing issues raised by the FATF: the counter-terrorism and transnational organized crime bill, the proceeds of crime bill and the mutual assistance in criminal matters bill. We are confident that the passage of those bills, the prioritizing of related issues through the appointment of an anti-money-laundering national coordinating committee — which also comprises the Australian official appointed as secretary for finance — and the coordinating committee's face-to-face meeting with FATF's Asia-Pacific Working Group in Brunei next week will bring us closer to our objective of being de-listed. We will persevere, as we know that, in the end, we will prevail.

The intervention by the Pacific Islands Forum is seen as pre-empting the possibility of the economic crisis escalating into a security and safety issue for the Nauruan people and for the region. Teams of regional experts representing the Forum and Australia have visited Nauru on a fact-finding mission, and we will be reporting to the leaders in due course, which will include recommendations on the type of assistance and the manner in which it should be rendered. While the proposal, which is to be formally known as Pacific Regional Assistance to Nauru, is being finalized, the Forum has agreed to provide, in the immediate future, capacity-building assistance in the justice, judicial, financial audit and national planning sectors, as well as transportation for the health and education sectors and a small cash grant to assist with public-sector wages.

That assistance is complementing the aid provided separately by Australia, which has deployed Australian finance and treasury officials to head the Nauru Department of Finance, and the deployment, next month, of Australian police to take command of the Nauru Police Force. Indeed, as I speak, the Parliament of Nauru is also considering a reform budget designed with the assistance of Australian finance and treasury officials. That budget includes harsh but realistic measures as a preliminary but decisive step towards stabilizing, and eventually rebuilding, the economy and society of Nauru.

For the same reasons, the Government of Nauru wrote to the Secretary-General in August of this year to alert him of the looming crisis in Nauru and to request assistance from the United Nations system to help to alleviate the plight of the Nauruan people. President Ludwig Scotty and Foreign Minister David Adeang may be visiting New York in the latter part of October to meet with the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations bodies on this matter. My Government looks forward to receiving a positive response from the

United Nations system, in the same manner as it did from the Pacific Islands Forum.

In conclusion, the fifty-ninth session has critical work ahead of it, such as the International Meeting for the 10-year Review of the Barbados Programme of Action, the introduction and deliberation on the findings of the High-Level Panel constituted by the Secretary-General, the review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the preparations for the 5-year review of the Millennium Declaration and its Goals and the continuation of our deliberations on the revitalization of the General Assembly and of the reform of the Security Council, to name but a few items.

As the Secretary-General has stated, the United Nations is at a fork in the road in terms of its relevance as an organization of nations seeking common solutions to common problems. The next 12 months will determine whether we, the united nations of the world, continue on the road where "business as usual" is the mode of operation or whether we follow the road of multilateralism as the principal rule of our engagement. The statements thus far indicate the latter, but we have heard that before.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

Numerous representatives have asked to exercise their right of reply. I wish to remind representatives that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention, and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Mamadov (Azerbaijan): I am taking the floor in exercise of rule 73 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure.

In his speech last week, my President expressed his views on a number of issues, including the problem of Nagorny Karabakh.

Armenia has today once again abused this rostrum to make another allegation against my country in order to justify its aggressive and belligerent policy, which is in complete contradiction to, and in violation of, the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

It is not my country but Armenia that threatens the fragile peace and stability of the region by its continued occupation of Nagorny Karabakh and seven adjacent Azerbaijani regions, in violation of the provisions of Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993). Those resolutions unequivocally confirm that Nagorny Karabakh is a part of Azerbaijan; decisively call for respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and its internationally recognized borders; underline the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory; resolutely demand an immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of occupying forces from all occupied areas of Azerbaijan and call for the establishment of conditions for the safe return of displaced persons to their places of permanent residence. By challenging the Security Council and ignoring the will of the international community, Armenia's policies, practices and statements — and today's statement is proof of this — threaten the peace and stability of the region, which will lack prospects for peace until and unless Armenia does away with its false historic and strategic propositions.

The next allegation deals with ethnic cleansing, mercenaries and international terrorists. Nothing could be more cynical than that allegation in relation to a country that shelters over 1 million refugees. Unfortunately, Armenia's historical memory is very selective. By the way, let me remind the foreign-born Armenian minister that it would have been good for him to know, before he became involved in foreign policy, that the neighbours of the country he is representing are not "Azeris" but Azerbaijanis. Let me also recall that the planned-in-advance expulsion of Azerbaijanis from Armenia began at the end of 1987, as a result of which 220 people were killed in Armenia, and 260,000 Azerbaijanis — let me stress, Azerbaijanis — who had for centuries resided in the territory of present-day Armenia became refugees. Armenia thereby became the only mono-ethnic country free of all minorities in the post-Soviet space.

Moreover, Armenia carried out ethnic cleansing in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The culmination of that was the Khojaly massacre, in which approximately 1,000 innocent people were killed. That event saw the first ethnic cleansing, the first assassinations and the first refugees in the Soviet space, and it was Armenians who were responsible for those crimes. The Armenian experience in ethnic cleansing worked. Although I agree with the statement that terrorism is inexcusable and unacceptable, we

must underscore that it is startling, at the very least, when such statements come from a Government that has long harboured and exported terrorists.

The very notion of organized crime as a means of furthering political demands was brought to life by Armenian nationalists at the end of the nineteenth century. Armenian propaganda — a piece of which we witnessed today — is contradicted by the principle that the brighter a light is, the more easily it is snuffed out. Thus, Armenia, despite its well-established record in international terrorism, tries to portray itself as a victim of terrorism.

Was it not the Government of Armenia that organized a series of terrorist attacks against Azerbaijan that resulted in the deaths of more than 2,000 innocent civilians? Was it not the Government of Armenia that advocated the release of an international terrorist, Varoujan Garbidijan, who had been imprisoned in France for perpetrating a terrorist bombing at Orly airport? As a result of the Armenian Government's efforts, Garbidijan was unfortunately released, receiving shelter nowhere but in Armenia, under the patronage of the Armenian Government.

Azerbaijan actively cooperates with international organizations that offer their mediation and assistance. Azerbaijan agreed to co-sponsor two proposals in 1997, while Armenia rejected them.

As for the Key West document to which the Armenian Minister referred, we have stated on a number of occasions that there was no agreement at Key West. Contrary to the Armenian Minister's allegation, Azerbaijan suggested that the Council of Europe send a mission to the region to monitor the situation on the ground. Since it was not compelled to comply with Security Council resolutions, Armenia, in an attempt to consolidate the occupation, has launched a policy to settle massive numbers of Armenians in the occupied Azerbaijani territories. The situation is deteriorating with the use of those territories for drug trafficking, weapons transfers, the harbouring of terrorists and illegal economic activities, including smuggling.

Armenia also exploits the natural resources of the occupied Azerbaijani territories. Furthermore, Armenia falsifies the history and misappropriates the cultural and architectural heritage of Nagorny Karabakh, another occupied region of Azerbaijan. Religious and historical monuments, ancient manuscripts and other cultural properties have been destroyed, refashioned, plundered or removed.

Another allegation made by the Armenian Minister has to do with history, the misjudgement of which, in our case, is probably the most dangerous. The Armenian Minister claims that the Armenian presence in this region has been long and extensive, no less than 2,000 years. But we have a different understanding of time and space. Among other than Armenian scholars, it is a well-known fact that, according to ancient sources and contemporary literature, Armenia was considered a geographical notion and was situated far beyond the limits of the southern Caucasus. Just like the Armenian Minister, we are familiar with our neighbours, and the present-day Armenian State was established at the expense of the Azerbaijani territories.

There is only one point on which I am probably in agreement with the Armenian Minister, but with a slight correction. Yes, the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis were forcibly linked together, but it was not in the twentieth century; it was in the nineteenth century, by the colonial Government's compulsory settlement of Armenians in the Azerbaijani territories.

Azerbaijan is prepared to collaborate with Armenia once Armenia has evacuated the occupied territories, has recognized the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and has accepted the autonomous status of the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Under those conditions, we can make history, work together for the peace, security and prosperity of the southern Caucasus — where borders do not matter, but deeds and tolerance do — and come to terms with our past, with our history and with the norms of international law.

Mr. Kaludjerović (Serbia and Montenegro): I regret that my first intervention before this body is in exercise of the right of reply. However, I must express my delegation's surprise at the statement made at the 15th meeting this morning by His Excellency Mr. Gábor Bródi, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hungary, in which he voiced his concern over the human rights situation in Serbia and Montenegro. He stated, among other things, that "It is particularly alarming that the number of incidents perpetrated against the non-Serb population, including the Hungarian community, is on the rise."

I would like to emphasize that the recent isolated and individual acts against our citizens of ethnic Albanian origin in the Serbian province of Vojvodina are no more than that — isolated and individual incidents. That assessment was reaffirmed by the top officials of both countries during the visit of the Hungarian President, Mr. Ferenc Mádl, to Serbia and Montenegro two weeks ago. However, we fear that the tensions could be exacerbated by hostile reactions that are not warranted by the situation.

My Government is absolutely convinced that those incidents will not undermine the traditionally good relations between Serbs and Hungarians in this northern Serbian province or among other ethnic communities, approximately 30 of which live in the province, which is probably the most multi-ethnic region in Europe. I would also like to assure the Assembly that my Government is determined to do its utmost to prevent the recurrence of such unfortunate events. Among other things, my Government has already undertaken necessary measures aimed at identifying and bringing to justice the parties responsible for those acts.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the promotion and protection of human rights — particularly minority rights — and fundamental freedoms is one of the top priorities of the Government of Serbia and Montenegro.

Mr. Cumberbach Miguén (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): In its exercise of the right of reply, my delegation regrets the role of judge of others that the Czech Republic has assumed for itself without being concerned about the beam in its own eye. It would have been more responsible for that delegation — instead of listing countries with supposed problems for the so-called defenders of human rights — to explain how they will resolve the spectacular increase of prostitution in their society, where, according to reports, that trade is generating $100 million a year. Neither children nor the thousands of women whom the syndicates enslave by controlling their passports and threatening to report them to the migration authorities escape that cruel exploitation.

The Minister of the Interior of the Czech Republic himself recognizes that more than 860 bordellos operate in that country to satisfy the deplorable sex market. It would have been more responsible to explain how they are fighting those syndicates, which are consuming all the nation's institutions, controlling everything from the illicit trade in drugs and weapons to financial crime and, more recently, penetrating the political parties.

Indeed, it would have been more responsible to explain what measures — if any — they have adopted to halt the advance of xenophobia and the onerous discrimination suffered in the Czech Republic by the Romani minority, which is practically confined to ghettos similar to those that were once common in that region of Europe some 60 years ago.

In view of its own situation, it would have been better for the Czech Government to worry about the grave social problems facing its own people rather than attempt to pass hypocritical judgements about what happens in other parts of the world.

Mrs. Grollová (Czech Republic): Let me briefly comment on what my colleague from Cuba just said in reply to the statement of the Czech Foreign Minister.

I have two remarks. First, the reply by our colleague was apparently an overreaction to a simple statement of fact — an overreaction which is often symptomatic of a fear of change. My Minister's statement was nothing more than a very moderate expression of sympathy for, and solidarity with, those brave men and women in countries such as Cuba whose only fault is that they hold views different from the official propaganda and who, unlike the majority of their compatriots, have the courage to articulate their views aloud, even if they are harassed and criminalized.

Secondly, when it comes to human rights, probably no country in the world has a 100 per cent clean record. My own country is no exception, and, of course, measures to prevent such things also constitute a very interesting topic for debate in the Third Committee, for example.

What makes the difference is how regimes deal with these issues. One option is to honestly engage in resolving problems in a transparent manner and in the context of an open dialogue with fellow citizens and with the respective international institutions, including mechanisms of the Human Rights Commission or other international human rights instruments.

The other option is to stick to rigid ideological schemes, closing the door to the international community and further feeding the oppressive

instruments in the hopes that this will enable a regime that has outlived its time to survive for another few years.

My country and its Government have chosen the first option. All we wanted to accomplish through the ministerial statement made in this forum was to encourage others to make the same choice. We know from our own experience that it is not easy, but, ultimately, it could be very rewarding.

Mr. Cumberbach Miguén (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall be brief, as it is not my delegation's intention to take up more of the precious time of delegations present in this Hall.

I regret to have to remind the Czech representative that those to whom she refers as defenders of human rights are merely mercenaries in the service of a foreign power which is seeking to suffocate my country and my people through hunger and economic blockade.

I must remind her that this is not the first time that the Czech Republic has engaged in all manner of manoeuvres against the Cuban revolution, in an attempt to discredit the achievements of its people. Our delegation reserves the right to speak at greater length on this point.

Our people, guided by our party and our Government, will not allow its revolution and the achievements it has to its credit to be sullied by mercenaries in the service of a foreign power to which the Government of the Czech Republic is providing support.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.